Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1948
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sacrifice was still practised in the Small Islands on certain ritual occasions till put a stop to by the white man, and is still practised on the Malekulan mainland, this does not form part of the ritual of the Maki itself, which, by the substitution of tusked boars, is held by the natives to constitute the main force in their culture making for peace.

Details of the procedure accompanying the sacrifice of these animals will be given in later chapters. This brief summary of their ritual importance is given here only to explain the immense value attached to them and the amount of time and care spent in their rearing. Not only are they reared at home, however; for trade in pigs is also the chief motive for the voyages undertaken by the Small Islanders in their seagoing canoes to the distant islands of Oba and Raga to the east, to Malo in the north as well as southward to Ambrim and the east coast of Malekula.

Tusked boars are also used, while alive, as currency. For, despite the elaborate ritual life that goes on in these islands, the Malekulan, not excluding the Small Islander, is nothing if not commercially minded, driving hard bargains, exacting the highest possible price for his daughters from their suitors, lending pigs out on loan, receiving high fees for the performance of magical rites, cures and other services; and, above all, in one of the most interesting ways of amassing wealth, namely the institution of copyright by which new songs and dances and even new forms of ritual are passed on from one individual or community to another on payment of high prices in pigs regulated according to the elongation of their tusks, without which payment not even the smallest element of ritual or artistic culture may be acquired by those not having previously possessed it.

New forms of the rite introduced from Lawor and Bot-walim.

This custom in turn enormously enhances the commercial importance of prestige, and itself largely results from the extraordinary mixture of cultures existing in these islands. For it is a fact well known to the inhabitants of every Malekulan village that hardly a single element of megalithic culture is indigenous. Every village has its own stories of where such and such an element of culture came from, and in the Small Islands it is known for a considerable number of generations back precisely what individual "bought" it and from where.

I have already mentioned the acquiring of the highest ranks in the megalithic hierarchy in South-West Bay from the village of Lambumbu some twenty miles up the coast. For the Small Islands the centre of distribution of innumerable new forms of ritual during the past eight generations has been the two villages of Lawor and Bot-walim which formerly flourished on the Malekulan mainland opposite Wala, but are now extinct owing to the bloody fighting that resulted from the first

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Even when this is agreed, the debtor may not possess a pig of the exact required grade. This leads to fresh transactions with yet other relatives, in which the debtor seeks to exchange such smaller pigs as he possesses against the single larger one demanded of him. In this way the ball rolls on. One transaction leads to another. Every pig-owner, that is to say every male adult, has pigs out on loan and is himself also a debtor to others. No man ever sees all his own pigs around him till the day of his death, when the final effort is made to regulate his affairs. Then, debtors and creditors assemble at his house and, if the latter are lucky and the dying man solvent, a just settlement takes place. If not, the debts are handed on to his successors. No loan is ever forgotten, and, with the additional factor of the uncertain prospect of life of any given pig, the complications never end. Every native complains that he has been cheated of value by others, and disputes leading to the forcible detention, or even the theft, of pigs are not infrequent. Given such a system, and the retentive memories of the natives, it is a tribute to the general common sense of the community and to the solidarity of kinsfolk—for it is only among close kinsfolk that extensive borrowing takes place—that such scenes are not more common than they are.

Sea-voyages for trade in pigs.

This short review of the commercial value of pigs has so far been confined within the precincts of Vao and of the neighbouring Small Islands and villages of the adjacent Malekulan mainland, where, owing to intermarriage, a Vao man's maternal kindred often dwell. Perhaps the most striking evidence of the great value attached to them, of the great labour willingly undertaken to preserve and increase the stock, and of the risks endured to prosecute this end, is that of the sea-voyages organised almost exclusively for the sake of obtaining fresh supplies, to make up for the loss caused by the sacrifice of immense numbers of tusked pigs during the course of innumerable rites. The construction and consecration of these sea-going canoes, by means of yet further sacrifice, will be described in a separate chapter.[1] Apart from the trade in turmeric leaves, obtained from the islands of Malo and Santo in return for pigs, and in a few other objects, such as special kinds of bark brought home from Ambrim for the construction of high-grade bark-board belts, also paid for with pigs, and in fine dancing-aprons used in a special kind of dance which are obtained from Oba, the sole commercial object of these voyages is the purchase of fresh stocks of pigs. Whatever the original use of these great canoes—and it is certain that they were, among other things, the vessels by means of which some portion at least of the ancestors of the existing population arrived on Vao—it is the trade in pigs that is now the prime object of their manufacture. For this purpose the immense labour of building them is

[1] Chapter XVII.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
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439 undertaken, large numbers of tusked pigs are sacrificed in order to consecrate them, and the effect of this consecration is to make them taboo to
484 women. In them the natives sail to all the large islands of the Northern
[501] New Hebrides, to Ambrim, Raga, Oba, Maewo, Malo and Santo. The chief sources of pigs are Ambrim and South Raga. Oba is chiefly visited on account of its reputation as the Land of Ta-ghar and for the special initiation rite performed there, but the trade in pigs with this island is now slight owing to its recent depopulation. Maewo, also known as the home of Ta-ghar, is now rarely visited. The trade with Malo and Santo is with pigs and turmeric leaves.

Voyages to the southern and eastern islands are usually made by night, the canoes leaving Vao in the late afternoon, and arriving at their destination some time during the following morning. Here they may stay anything up to five days, and then wait for a fair wind to take them home. The days are spent in bargaining. Emotion runs high, and there are many records of fights arising out of disputes, in some of which the visitors manage to save themselves, but in others they are slain and in most cases eaten. Individual accounts of such voyages as undertaken from Atchin will be given in a later volume.

To such lengths will the natives go to keep up their supply of pigs.

Value of tusked boars in terms of English money.

433 Before seeking the underlying reason for this passionate search, one
436 more fact may be mentioned to show the immense value attached to these
434 animals. During the time of my visit there was but little European money in the Small Islands, acquired chiefly by means of the very low wages earned by the indentured labour undertaken by some of the younger men on white men's plantations, supplemented by the selling of a little copra to passing white men's trading-vessels. The amount of money thus made is not very great. What they do make is partly spent in buying white men's goods, such as an occasional singlet or piece of corrugated iron, partly saved up to buy whalers which now replace the sea-going canoes I have just mentioned, and partly used for trading among themselves, in which case it usually replaces their own money-mats. Pigs are not often sold for money, but when this does happen, the prices they fetch
435 are such as to astound the white man, who fails to understand what it is all about. Thus, when I was on Atchin, prices averaged:

For a crescent-tusker	.	about £4 [1]
„ curved-tusker .	.	„ £6
„ re-entrant-tusker	.	„ £10, £12 or £15
„ circle-tusker .	.	from £30 upwards.

[1] Deacon (4, p. 391), six years later, cites a crescent-tusker in Seniang, there called *mbong mwûs*, as being worth £5, with corresponding prices for pigs of lower grade.

1;Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
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made on these islands, especially on Oba, and so highly prized by the Small Islanders. For this reason, the visits more often than not pass off without untoward incident. But there is always the possibility that, lacking any kinship ties, the inhabitants, owing to some dispute over pigs, or some chance slight on their dignity, may turn hostile. So the Small Islanders always go fully armed, and place sentries round about the Lodge to warn them of possible danger.

Ambrim, East Malekula, Malo, Santo.

The same is true, to a slightly lesser extent, of expeditions to Ambrim, where they go also to trade in pigs, and to that part of the east coast of Malekula which is outside the Small Island cultural area as far south as Port Sandwich, which at the present day is the most southerly point to which voyages are made. It was from Unua, on this coast, that the natives of Vao obtained, by payment of pigs, the human victim sacrificed on the erection of a former *ghamal* at Pete-hul.[1] To the north, Malo and Santo are visited for the sake of obtaining the turmeric leaves used in the dying of the red mats manufactured in the Small Islands.[2] So far as I know, no initiation rite is practised by the Small Islanders on these islands, nor are there any special Lodges affording diplomatic immunity, and the Small Islanders have to rely on friendship and the self-interest of the inhabitants not to attack them.

INTRODUCTION OF FIREARMS BY EUROPEANS

CAUSING WHOLESALE MASSACRES AND THE VIRTUAL EXTINCTION OF THE ONCE FLOURISHING POPULATION OF THE ADJACENT MALEKULAN MAINLAND

The last chapter in the chequered war history of these islands has reversed all precedents. This has been due to the introduction of muskets into the islands by white men. From the first arrival of the sandalwood traders about a century ago down to the present time the natives all over the group have been provided with shot-guns and rifles—all commonly referred to as muskets—which have been sold to them, partly in exchange for land or in return for coconuts or for direct payment in coin, and partly, in the early days apparently, out of a deliberate attempt to promote war for the sake of creating a demand for cartridges sold at exorbitant prices. The Condominium agreement of 1906 included a clause forbidding such sales, but the sales still go on. The result is that, for decades past, almost every adult male in the group, at any rate in the Small Islands and Malekula, has possessed a gun, and still does. Now that there is a

[1] See p. 451. [2] See p. 456.

3: Harrisson N-5 (1934-1935) 1936
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Big Nambas

From the first missionary, John Williams, murdered in 1839, until the present day, these devoted men, working according to their own lights, meeting often with sudden death, have been the only influence for good and sanity of any sort; even had they accomplished nothing, the missionaries would be the best people in island history. It was not always the Mission who converted the people or disrupted the native civilization. It was the chaos of endless new unknown diseases, the fundamental cultural upset due to iron and firearms. In seeking protection from these and from the other whites who brought them, the natives came to the missionary. The early records of the group are a ghastly list of introduced diseases—scarlet fever, measles, consumption, smallpox, phthisis, gonorrhoea, whooping cough, influenza, diphtheria, meningitis—all fatal to these people. The population, particularly where it was much in contact with whites, was decimated. Their culture was based on a certain speed, rhythm, and age-cycle; the sudden death of artist, magician, or chief upset the whole. The old beliefs, ancient gods, countermagics, and native herbs, could do nothing; so they turned to the white man's god, who must be stronger than their own. The new trend among the missionized people, as it gathers internal momentum, shows signs of turning against its instigators, the white missionaries. So far experiments in founding a native-run church have regularly failed. The new motive power is economic rather than religious; some revival of passive heathenism is an ingredient. The price of copra, regulated by the combines far away in Europe, has become in many ways the determining factor. During the period of my visit copra prices reached their lowest level. The missionized natives have become dependent on their coconuts to earn them money for knives, calico, tobacco, belts, even bread, rice, and tinned meat—the substitutes for "heathen" things that have become extinct through mission influence. Low prices mean little money and a standard of living reduced below the level of the last thirty years, in many ways below that of the heathen bushmen. This annoys the native against the white, who has created these demands and will not satisfy them; and a shirt has become the essential symbol of a mission native, to such an extent that without a shirt he feels no longer Christian. I doubt if the group has within sight an important economic future for the white man, despite the recent optimistic accounts of Archimbaud (1927) and Lop (1933). The Chinese and Japanese are rapidly gaining economic power; they may find in these fever- and cyclone-ridden islands an important outlet. Half-castes are not numerous. French ones rank equal with pure Frenchmen as citizens, and run many French plantations.

Recently the administration have to some extent changed their policy, for example in relation to trouble within the native community and in appointing me to pacify the Big Nambas. The native will therefore expect more arbitration in future; if it is not provided, the administration will be discredited, to the danger of all whites.

So the age-long cycle goes on. The native population was never stable, either in culture or in numbers. When Quiros came the population was about at a peak in the north; now it has reached a trough, on the interminable up and down of all races. It is time for the Melanesian to climb again. He is climbing wherever conditions are at all favourable. And the vital question

3: Harrisson N-5 (1934-1935) 1936
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busia introduced to destroy mosquito larvae; the movements of hill people to the sea controlled; no women should be allowed to work on a plantation. If these steps are taken the physical conservation of the bushman may be achieved.

The cultural conservation technique cannot be expressed so concretely. It is too late to preserve the pattern complete. There is however a good alternative, and I can best give my point of view by describing a concrete example of what can happen with proper guidance or good luck, as on the island of Atchin.

(ii) *Atchin*, 1935.—There is no doubt that on small islands a mile or less across health is much better and *Anopheles* mosquitoes are often absent. They are the small island populations which are increasing most rapidly throughout the group, though some are still decreasing, and in these islands I see the best future of the race. Most have mainly mission populations, but on some heathens are dominant. One such is Atchin, half a mile off the east coast of Malekula; of the four hundred and eighty natives less than two dozen are Christians. A Seventh Day Adventist missionary lived there for many years, and all the other missions maintain native teachers there. The missions have had no success, but the natives got some ideas from them which they have incorporated into their own culture. More valuable has proved the visit of an anthropologist, John W. Layard. He was there more than twenty years ago, but to this day is remembered as Tsoni (Johnny). He gained a remarkable understanding of the Atchinese, and his sympathy greatly encouraged the people to keep up their old heathen customs. Like all Hebrideans, the Atchinese sold land to the whites for a few guns in the early days. Unlike all the rest, they have since bought it back. Their country is their own. As their yam gardens are on the mainland, they are expert canoeists; they still keep up the old canoe voyages to Ambrym, trading penis-wrappers for pigs; to Malo, Santo, and east Malekula. The old turmeric-dye leaf trade has been taken over by French ships, and for some years now there has been no ritual sex-initiation voyage to Omba, home of the benign deity Ta-har (= Tagaro). The best fishermen, whole villages club their copra together to get a modern European drag net; but do not let decay the ancient stone-wall trap, a sort of lobster-pot, and the special handnets for the Palolo worm, which at certain seasons appears in millions, giving its name to three of the lunar months. They run their own stores and sell their own copra to the highest bidder of the several ships that call in search of this lucrative trade. They encourage whites to visit but not to stop. They make sham spears to sell to world-touring yachts which call regularly to see these remarkably safe savages; the real spears they do not show. They have twice done all their dances for film companies, in no way to the detriment of the dance culture or significance, rather the opposite. Baker (1935, p. 212) says of the Sakaus, Santo: "If they had been persuaded to dance for the tourists it would have been the beginning of the break-up of their culture, in which dancing plays an important part. . . . The prostitution of their culture by tourists would be deleterious not only to themselves but also to social anthropology." Apart from the fact that the Sakaus have unfortunately lost, almost forgotten, the whole dance-cycle of the highest chiefly grade (*vuster*), and that the special dance for the marriage of a